



## KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS BERNICE PAUAI BISHOP ESTATE

### Testimony for the Reconciliation Process Hearings Health and Education

December 10, 1999 -- East West Center

Mr. John Berry, Assistant Secretary, Policy, Management and Budget,  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mr. Mark Van Norman, Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

*Aloha pumehana kākou!* Thank you Mr. Berry and Mr. Van Norman for this opportunity to discuss the very important issue of Native Hawaiian education. I am Michael Chun, President of the Kamehameha Schools.

In 1883, ten years before the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the founder of the Kamehameha Schools, committed her entire fortune to the schooling of native children. Even then, she knew that the key to their future was education. For over a century, Kamehameha has endorsed and supported this worthy mission and has influenced the lives of over 18,000 graduates, and many hundreds of thousands more through our outreach programs.

Today, we enroll 3,500 students on three campuses and we annually serve another 5,000 students in statewide summer programs. Just over 1,000 4-year-olds attend our preschools on five islands, and each year we provide more than 3,000 Hawaiian students in Hawai'i and across the country with college financial aid to further their education.

In an effort to expand our reach, Kamehameha also partners with the federal government. In 1985, we initiated the Kamehameha Talent Search Program. In the ensuing years, over 13,000 students from Hawai'i public schools with high Hawaiian populations have participated in career guidance and college planning activities. Currently, we operate this program in 15 O'ahu and East Hawai'i schools.

Another federal partnership, the Native Hawaiian Higher Education Program, targets Native Hawaiian high school graduates for enrollment and scholarships in post-secondary institutions. Since the grant's inception in 1995, it has served 194 Native Hawaiian students. A unique component of this program requires all scholarship recipients to fulfill a community service obligation in the Native Hawaiian community. Last year, this program boasted a community service placement rate of 91.9 percent and a college retention rate of 98.9 percent.

These accomplishments are encouraging. But there are data that assures us the end is still nowhere in sight. Although their high school completion rate is 77 percent, only about 9 percent

of Hawaiians complete college. This is lower than the 11 percent college completion rate for African Americans.

At the other end of the scale, Hawaiian 5-year-olds are entering Kindergarten with picture vocabulary ratings at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile; lower than the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide average. In statewide SAT testing at grades 3, 6, 8 and 10, Hawaiian students score at about the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile; lower than the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide average, and far below the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile average for Caucasian and Japanese students.

In addition, the rates for absenteeism and retention-in-grade among Hawaiian students are considerably higher than for other ethnic groups. And understandably, assessments reveal a functional illiteracy rate of about 30 percent among adult Hawaiians.

There is much more to be done. The education of a native people and the restoration of their pride and self-determination is a worthy and noble goal, and Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate is committed to seeing this effort through. On behalf of our Board of Trustees, employees and students, I urge the federal government's continued support and funding for Native Hawaiian educational programs and scholarships. *Mahalo nui loa.*

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